the broker have been attached by the Custodian.

(d) and (e) As the matter is pending in the Special Court, no specific time frame can be indicated by the SBI for recovery of the amount.

Constitution of Study Group to Consider Backwardness of Taluka Instead of district for sanctioning of Tax Hodliday

1087. SHRI ANANTRAY DEVSANKER DAVE: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Govemment have constituted a study group to examine the feasibility of the proposal received from Govemment of Gujarat for reconsideration of the backwardness of taluka instead of district as a whole, as parameter for sanctioning of tax holiday under Section 81 (a) of the Income Tax Act, 1961;

(b) if so, whether the report of the study group has been received and considered by Govemment; and

(c) if so, the findings of the study group and the decision taken by Government in declaring the backwardness of taluka instead of district as a whole for income tax purpose in the State of Gujarat?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI M.P. VEERENDRA KUMAR): (a) to (c) A study group was constituted in the Ministry of Finance for identification of industrially backward districts for the purpose of granting 100% tax holiday under Section 80-IA of the Income-Tax Act. A number of states including Gujarat had suggested that instead of district, Taluka' or Tehsil' should be treated as the base unit for notification under Section 80-IA. To examine this issue in addition to some other points, a review study group was constituted in the Ministry of Finance, The review study group has submitted its report which is under consideration of the Govemment.

Performance of Public Sector Banks in Bihar

1088. SHRI GYAN RANJAN: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) the performance of each of the public sector banks in the matter of their deposits, loan distribution etc. during the last three years in Bihar; and

(b) the target fixed and loans granted in agricultural and industrial sectors and also under self employment scheme by each of the banks during the above period?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI M.P. VEERENDRA KUMAR): (a) The Aggregate deposits and gross bank credit of public sector banks for the last three years in Bihar as furnished by Reserve Bank of India (RBI) is given in the Annexure *[See Appendix 180, Annexure, 22]*

(b) Information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House to the extent possible.

Sale of good seized by Customs Department

1089. SHRI GYAN RANJAN: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether some persons have been permitted to sell confiscated goods seized by officials of Customs Department; and

(b) the norms prescribed for giving such permission?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI M.P. VEERENDRA KUMAR): (a) and (b) Confiscated goods are disposed by Customs Department by retail sale, auction and through NCCF and Consumer Cooperative Societies. Ordinarily resale of confiscated goods does not require permission from the Customs Department.

Newsitem regarding forged drafts

1090. SHRI O.P. KOHLI: Will the Minister
of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the newsitem captioned "Racket in forged draft unearthed" appearing in the Hindustan Times dated 25.12.96;

(b) if so, the facts thereof; and

(c) the reaction of Govemment thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI M.P. VEERENDRA KUMAR): (a) to (c) Govemment have seen the newsitem referred

of Baroda (BOB) are as under:—

(i) A demand draft for Rs. 50,000 was deposited in the newly opened current account in the name of M/s. Parveen Hide Company at Hapur Branch of BOB and Rs. 35,000 was withdrawn by Ms. Parveen on 13.12.1996. The Branch received a mail transfer dated 16.12.1996 purportedly issued by its Latouche Road, Kanpur Branch for Rs. 8.50 lakhs favouring the firm. Enquiry with Latouche Road Branch revealed that the draft and mail transfer were not issued by them. FIR was lodged with local police at Hapur on 21.12.1996. Police arrested Ms. Parveen, her two other accomplices and five other persons including the watchman and the clerk of Latouche Road Branch. The watchman and the clerk have been placed under suspension.

(ii) An account in the name of M/s. B.R. Enterprises was opened in January, 1995 at Clock Tower, Ghaziabad Branch of BOB. On 20.10.1995, one mail transfer for Rs. 6.80 lakhs purported to have been issued by Sisamau, Kanpur Branch of BOB was credited to the account and several withdrawals aggregating Rs. 3.30 lakhs were allowed from this account. The fraud came to light when the Clock Tower, Ghaziabad Branch contacted Sisamau, Kanpur Branch and it was revealed that the mail transfer for Rs. 6.80 lakhs was a fake one. FIR was lodged with the police.

(iii) During periodical inspection of Muzaffumagar Branch of BOB in December, 1996, it was found that a draft book containing 50 demand drafts was missing. Instructions were issued to all the branches to exercise caution in making payments against stolen drafts. However, 12 demand drafts for Rs. 26.18 lakhs had already been paid by the Bulandshahar and Akbarpur Branches of BOB in September-October, 1996. The enquiry carried out by the bank revealed certain lapses such as absence of joint control of security forms and periodical physical verification of stock of security forms at Muzaffumagar Branch and non-observance of caution in high value transactions at Bulandshahar and Akbarpur Branches. The concerned Zonal Offices have been advised to issue specific instructions to all branches for physical verification of security forms. FIR has been lodged by Muzaffumagar Branch in December, 1996. Akbarpur Branch has also lodged FIR with the police who have arrested one of the account holders. The accountant of Muzaffarnagar branch has been suspended.

Reserve Bank of India has advised all the banks to strictly adhere to the prescribed procedures and guidelines in regard to opening and operating of bank accounts. The banks have also been advised to exercise due caution for verification of drawer's signatures, supervision over issue of cheque books and control over custody of blank cheques/leaves, safe custody of bank drafts and mail transfer forms as security items etc. The RBI inspecting officers also scrutinise the records of the banks on sample basis to'see whether the prescribed guidelines/instructions in regard to opening of new accounts are scrupulously followed.

Vacancies of Chairmen of Public Sector Banks

1091. SHRI AMAR SINGH: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) the names of public sector banks which are functioning without their chairmen and the reasons for not filling up these vacancies;

(b) the details of vacancies which are likely to occur during the current year; and

(c) whether the prospective incumbents have not been selected, if so, the reasons therefor and by when these are proposed to be selected?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI M.P. VEERENDRA KUMAR): (a) and (b) The posts of Chairmen and Managing Directors which are presently lying vacant and those likely to occur during the current year are as under:—

Sr. No.	*Name of the Post Existing acancies*
1.	Chairman and Managing Director, Canara Bank.
2.	Chairman and Managing Director, UCO Bank.
3.	Chairman and Managing Director, Corporation Bank.